THE
CATHOLIC RADICAL

"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed." Peter Maurin

August/September 2015 ***Price: For whatever it's worth.***

Laudato Si!

by Pope Francis

Editor's Note: The following are excerpts from Pope Francis' encyclical on the care of our common home. The complete text cam be found under encyclicals at: http://w2.vatican.va/content/vatican/en.html.

1. "LAUDATO SI, mi Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord." In the words of this beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us.

2. This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air, and in all forms of life....

21. ...The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth. In many parts of the planet, the elderly lament that once beautiful landscapes are now covered with rubbish. Industrial waste and chemical products utilized in cities and agricultural areas can lead to bio-accumulation in the organisms of the local population, even when levels of toxins in those places are low. Frequently no measures are taken until after people's health has been irreversibly affected.

22. These problems are closely linked to a throwaway culture which affects the excluded just as it quickly reduces things to rubbish. To cite one example, most of the paper we produce is thrown away and not recycled. It is hard for us to accept that the way natural ecosystems work is exemplary: plants synthesize nutrients which feed herbivores; these in turn become food for carnivores, which produce significant quantities of organic waste which give rise to new generations of plants. But our industrial system, at the end of its cycle of production and consumption, has not developed the capacity to absorb and reuse waste and by-products. We have not yet managed to adopt a circular model of production capable of preserving resources for present and future generations, while limiting as much as possible the use of non-renewable resources, moderating their consumption, maximizing their efficient use, reusing and recycling them....

23. The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all. At the global level, it is a complex system linked to many of the essential conditions for human life. A very solid scientific consensus indicates that we are presently witnessing a disturbing warming of the climatic system. In recent decades this warming has been accompanied by a constant rise in the sea level and, it would appear, by an increase of extreme weather events, even if a scientifically determinable cause cannot be assigned to each particular phenomenon. Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes

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Shoot First?

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

Batman never carried a gun, and yet, when he encountered a gang of armed hoodlums, "The Caped Crusader" used his agility and strength to disarm them. Sometimes, he'd rely on his bat rope or bat boomerang, but he and his teenage sidekick, Robin, would always win the day.

Why is it then that on June second, three Boston police officers and two FBI agents could not subdue a 26-year-old, knife-wielding suspect, named Usaama Rahim, without shooting him to death?

Video shows that the officers shot Rahim three times within minutes of approaching him. They did not expend any significant time trying to talk him down. They did not use billy clubs or pepper spray or tasers. Their first option after a verbal warning was lethal force. They did not even try to shoot the knife out of his hand or to wound the knife-wielding arm. Standing less than ten feet away, it would not have required expert marksmanship to use a gun non-lethally. Doesn't anyone ever fire a warning shot any more?

Apparently, police procedure does not require officers to exhaust or even to attempt any non-lethal means of disarming a suspect save warning them that they will shoot to kill. Boston police released video of the confrontation which shows the gang of officers retreating, they say, in fear, from Rahim's knife. So long as a police officer has "reasonable fear for his or her life," lethal force is justified. Boston's Police Commissioner Evans said, "Unfortunately, he came at the officers, and, you know, they do what they were trained to do, and, unfortunately, they had to take a life."

In my youth, cops seemed more willing

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Vol. 32, No. 1 THE August/September 2015

CATHOLIC RADICAL

Published every two months by:
The Saints Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker Community
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Founded in 1933 by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, the Catholic Worker is a lay movement serving the poor while denouncing injustice and proclaiming peace. We are not tax exempt. We rely entirely on the generosity of our supporters to meet our expenses. We welcome volunteers, letters, poetry, articles, artwork, and donations.

Shoot First?

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to talk or wrestle down a belligerent suspect than to gun him or her down. And that was before cops began wearing body armor and had any other weapons save a billy club. Are today's police more fearful, less brave, or less well-trained? In my opinion, five decent field hockey players could disarm a single guy with a knife. Why can't five law enforcement officers manage it? Why are they not even expected to try? Is killing all they are trained to do, especially in the case of Black, Latino, or Islamic suspects?

For those who would argue that the times in which we live demand more use of lethal force, a look at policing in Britain is in order. Although it is an urbanized, first-world nation like the United States, Great Britain largely relies on police officers armed only with billy clubs and pepper spray. Those few who are authorized to carry guns are vigorously vetted and trained. In the last three years, only two suspects in Britain have been shot to death. As of June 22, American police officers have already killed at least 290 suspects (I say "at least" because, while the federal government keeps records on how many police officers are killed, 48 in 2012, it does not record how many suspects are killed by police. The National Rifle Association is so powerful, it was able to convince Congress to block the Center for Disease Control's efforts to keep statistics on US gun deaths).

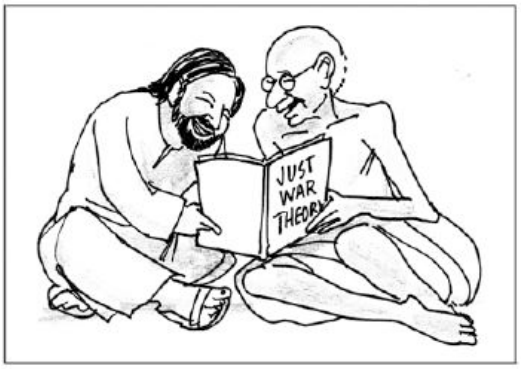
While Britain has only a fifth of the US population, it does have huge, multi-racial urban centers with impoverished neighborhoods. And yet, the Greater Manchester Police, covering an area with more than two million people, have killed only three suspects in the past *thirty* years. Their force of 6,700 officers includes just 209 authorized to carry guns. Those few are trained to consider the use of guns as their very last resort. Manchester Chief of Police, Peter Fahy, told *The Boston Globe* on June 12, "There's a huge emphasis on human rights, a huge emphasis on proportionality, a huge emphasis on considering every other option."

But do the British ever have to face mass shootings like those in Newtown, Aurora, and Charlestown? Actually, they do, but their response is quite different. In 1987, 16 people were shot dead in Hungerford, and, in the Scottish town of Dunblane in 1996, 16 children and a teacher were killed. After the Hungerford attack, Parliament banned the private ownership of semiautomatic and pump-action rifles and imposed tight controls on shotguns. In the wake of the Dunblane killings, it became illegal to own or possess a handgun. In the US, mass killings, no matter how frequent or horrific, have not emboldened politicians to enact even minor gun control.

In a similar vein, too many American politicians are quick to draw the military out of the nation's holster. Although the US has carried out hundreds of air strikes in Syria and Iraq, killing thousands, Republican presidential candidate Rick Santorum, a proud Catholic, said, "We aren't doing any kind of substantial damage in the air against ISIS; we have to step up the bombing campaign and you can't do that unless you have more boots on the ground." The get-tough crowd campaigns as if President Obama had never employed drones, bombs, and US proxies to kill with impunity. They sell war as a panacea despite its especially abysmal record over the last 14 years.

Commissioner Evans' comment about police could apply just as easily to politicians: "They do what they were trained to do." In our schools and broader culture, we do not prize conflict resolution, restorative justice, diplomacy, and nonviolence with its resonant virtues of mercy, patience, creativity, respect, and hope. Our cities are filled with memorials to those who killed others, even civilians, in war. Our national anthem stems from a battle in the War of 1812. Our military has taken more than two million lives since 1991. Our police have killed untold numbers. And we pay a very high price, in lives, dollars, and moral stature, for our quick-draw mentality. Neither war, capital punishment, euthanasia, abortion, nor the ever-looser authority of police to kill has alleviated the social ills they were embraced to address.

It's high time we demanded more rational and sustainable approaches. Ω



"People try nonviolence for a week, and when it 'doesn't work' they go back to violence, which hasn't worked for centuries."

-Theodore Roszak

A Worthwhile Video Game

review by Aiden Duffy

Kisima Inŋitchuŋa, also known by its English name, "Never Alone," is a platform-based, side-scrolling adventure video game released in November 2014 by Upper One Games. The player takes on the roles of Nuna, an Iñupiaq girl, and her nameless arctic fox companion as they traverse the Alaskan countryside in an epic journey reflective of tribal folklore of the Arctic Northwest.

At face value, the game seems to hold nothing particularly innovative or impressive in its design, but, after you sit down to play, you are pulled into an experience that transcends the border of fantasy and reality. In creating *Never Alone*, Upper One Games collaborated with the Cook Inlet Tribal Council, a non-profit organization dedicated to education and the sharing of native culture with urban areas of Alaska. The Council's goal was to create a means of presenting their people's history and tradition through a more modern media form than oral storytelling and thus, *Never Alone* was born.

Dima Veryovka

While their project holds many common tropes of video games, including hand-eye coordination, puzzle solving, and level-based progression of story, *Never Alone* is much more of an experience than a game. The story is an adaptation of *Kunuuksaayuka*, one of the most well-known legends of the Native Alaskan people. Its details are narrated in the Iñupiat language, making the experience of gameplay feel much more like a story being told than a video game. This concept is coupled with bonus in-game content called "cultural insights" that can be discovered while journeying through the game. Each one of these insights unlocks a short video segment compiled by the Cook Inlet Tribal Council that explains various cultural features and references within the game. By finding all of these insights, the player compiles a small documentary of clips that together explain the game and Iñupiat culture as a whole.

Dima Veryovka

One of *Never Alone's* most powerful messages is one that is central to the Inupiat people's way of life — the importance of community. Just as native Alaskans rely on the support of their tribe members to survive in a harsh climate, Nuna must rely on the help of various animals and spirits she encounters in her journey to overcome the trials she faces. When a caribou or whale is brought back from the hunt, it is shared throughout the entire community not only with the hunter's immediate family. In the unforgiving environment of the Arctic Northwest, selfishness and individual ownership cannot afford to exist. Without cooperative living, the very survival of the tribe is impossible. This lifestyle has become rare in our modern world where many seek the betterment of only a select few. *Never Alone* teaches its audience to strive to be people who put the needs of many above self-gain.

While much more can be said about the merits of this game in terms of its use of strong female protagonist, inspiring story line, educational, and informative content, it would be best to end with the game developers own words: "Never Alone *leverages the power of video games to share, celebrate and extend culture. These World Games will empower indigenous communities around the world to share their stories in an authentic, engaging, and entertaining way.*" Ω

Editor's Note: Never Alone *was the 2015 winner of the British Academy of Film and Television Arts award for Best Debut. It also won the 2015 Games for Change award for the Most Impact. It is available for Playstation4, Xbox One, Wii U, and PC with access on Steam, as well as Mac operating systems.*

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Laudato Si

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of lifestyle, production, and consumption, in order to combat this warming or at least the human causes which produce or aggravate it.

25. Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political, and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day. Its worst impact will probably be felt by developing countries in coming decades. Many of the poor live in areas particularly affected by phenomena related to warming, and their means of subsistence are largely dependent on natural reserves and ecosystemic services such as agriculture, fishing, and forestry. They have no other financial activities or resources which can enable them to adapt to climate change or to face natural disasters, and their access to social services and protection is very limited. For example, changes in climate, to which animals and plants cannot adapt, lead them to migrate; this in turn affects the livelihood of the poor, who are then forced to leave their homes, with great uncertainty for their future and that of their children. There has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation. They are not recognized by international conventions as refugees; they bear the loss of the lives they have left behind, without enjoying any legal protection whatsoever. Sadly, there is widespread indifference to such suffering, which is even now taking place throughout our world. Our lack of response to these tragedies involving our brothers and sisters points to the loss of that sense of responsibility for our fellow men and women upon which all civil society is founded.

26. Many of those who possess more resources and economic or political power seem mostly to be concerned with masking the problems or concealing their symptoms, simply making efforts to reduce some of the negative impacts of climate change. However, many of these symptoms indicate that such effects will continue to worsen if we continue with current models of production and consumption. There is an urgent need to develop policies so that, in the next few years, the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced, for example, substituting for fossil fuels and developing sources of renewable energy....

27. Other indicators of the present situation have to do with the depletion of natural resources. We all know that it is not possible to sustain the present level of consumption in developed countries and wealthier sectors of society, where the habit of wasting and discarding has reached unprecedented levels. The exploitation of the planet has already exceeded acceptable limits and we still have not solved the problem of poverty....

35. In assessing the environmental impact

of any project, concern is usually shown for its effects on soil, water and air, yet few careful studies are made of its impact on biodiversity, as if the loss of species or animals and plant groups were of little importance.... As a result, some species face extinction....

49. It needs to be said that, generally speaking, there is little in the way of clear awareness of problems which especially affect the excluded. Yet they are the majority of the planet's population.....

50. Instead of resolving the problems of the poor and thinking of how the world can be different, some can only propose a reduction in the birth rate. At times, developing countries face forms of international pressure which make economic assistance contingent on certain policies of "reproductive health." ...To blame population growth instead of extreme and selective consumerism on the part of some, is one way of refusing to face the issues. It is an attempt to legitimize the present model of distribution, where a minority believes that it has the right to consume in a way which can never be universalized, since the planet could not even contain the waste products of such consumption. Besides, we know that approximately a third of all food produced is discarded, and "whenever food is thrown out it is as if it were stolen from the table of the poor"

52. The foreign debt of poor countries has become a way of controlling them, yet this is not the case where ecological debt is concerned. In different ways, developing countries, where the most important reserves of the biosphere are found, continue to fuel the development of richer countries at the cost of their own present and future. The land of the southern poor is rich and mostly unpolluted, yet access to ownership of goods and resources for meeting vital needs is inhibited by a system of commercial relations and ownership which is structurally perverse. The developed countries ought to help pay this debt by significantly limiting their consumption of non-renewable energy and by assisting poorer countries to support policies and programs of sustainable development.... We need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family....

57. It is foreseeable that, once certain resources have been depleted, the scene will be set for new wars, albeit under the guise of noble claims....

203. Since the market tends to promote extreme consumerism in an effort to sell its products, people can easily get caught up in a whirlwind of needless buying and spending....This paradigm leads people to believe that they are free as long as they have the supposed freedom to consume. But those really free are the minority who wield economic and financial power. Amid this confusion, postmodern humanity has not yet achieved a new self-awareness capable of offering guidance and direction, and this lack of identity is a source of anxiety....

204. ...When people become self-centred and self-enclosed, their greed increases. The emptier a person's heart is, the more he or she needs things to buy, own and consume. It becomes almost impossible to accept the limits imposed by reality. In this horizon, a genuine sense of the common good also disappears.... Obsession with

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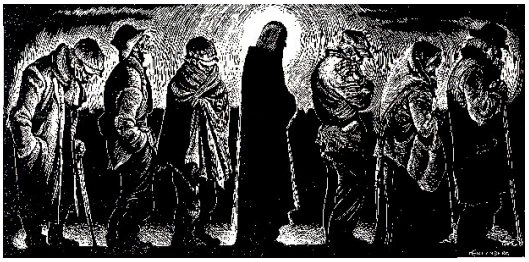

Fritz Eichenberg

Love Is the Measure

By Dorothy Day

Editor's Note: This article first appeared in 1947 in The Catholic Worker.

We confess to being fools and wish that we were more so. In the face of the approaching atom bomb test; in the face of an approaching maritime strike; in the face of bread shortages and housing shortages; in the face of the passing of the draft extension, teenagers included, we face the situation that there is nothing we can do for people except to love them.... We continue in our 14th year of feeding our brothers and sisters, clothing them and sheltering them, and the more we do it, the more we realize that the most important thing is to love. There are several families with us, destitute families, destitute to an unbelievable extent, and there, too, is nothing to do but to love. What I mean is that there is no chance of rehabilitation, no chance, so far as we see, of changing them; certainly no chance of adjusting them to this abominable world about them, — and who wants them adjusted, anyway?

What we would like to do is change the world — make it a little simpler for people to feed, clothe, and shelter themselves as God intended them to do. And, by fighting for better conditions, by crying out unceasingly for the rights of the workers, and the poor, of the destitute — the rights of the worthy and the unworthy poor, in other words — we can to a certain extent change the world; we can work for the oasis, the little cell of joy and peace in a harried world. We can throw our pebble in the pond and be confident that its ever-widening circle will reach around the world.

We repeat, there is nothing that we can do but love, and dear God — please enlarge our hearts to love each other, to love our neighbor, to love our enemy as well as our friend.

Whenever I groan within myself and think how hard it is to keep writing about love in these times of tension and strife which may, at any moment, become for us all a time of terror, I think to myself: what else is the world interested in? What else do we all want, each one of us, except to love and be loved, in our families, in our work, in all our relationships? God is Love. Love casts out fear. Even the most ardent revolutionist, seeking to change the world, to overturn the tables of the money changers, is trying to make a world where it is easier for people to love, to stand in that relationship to each other. We want with all our hearts to love, to be loved. And not just in the family, but to look upon all as our mothers, sisters, brothers, children. It is when we love the most intensely and most humanly that we can recognize how tepid is our love for others. The keenness and intensity of love brings with it suffering, of course, but joy, too, because it is a foretaste of heaven.

When you love people, you see all the good in them. There can never be enough thinking about it. Saint John of the Cross said that where there was no love, put love and you would draw love out.... Ω

Ade Bethune

Chaplet of Divine Love

by Will Raymond

I give my love to You, O Lord Jesus Christ,
in acts of repentance and contrition
that my heart may be washed clean
in the river of Your mercy.

I give my love to You, O Lord Jesus Christ,
by acts of atonement
and the completeness of my acceptance
of Your absolution of my transgressions.

I give my love to You, O Lord Jesus Christ,
in simple acts of remembrance of Your life and name
during times of stillness and silence
And throughout the active hours of my days.

I give my love to You, O Lord Jesus Christ,
in times of joy and laughter with family and friends
and in the communal festivals that mark the changing
seasons of each passing year.

I give my love to You, O Lord Jesus Christ
as I seek to refine the quality of forgiveness
and service I offer to others.

I give my love to You, O Lord Jesus Christ,
in my confusing struggles with faith and doubt
as I seek Your presence amidst the violence
and injustice of this world

I give my love to You, O Lord Jesus Christ,
in the silent embrace of Holy Communion
where our lives touch and intermingle
in the secret chambers of my deepest heart.

I give my love to You, O Lord Jesus Christ,
in acts of deepening surrender to Your gift
of eternal life in the refuge of Your sacred grace
and perfect love. Ω

Editor's Note: Will Raymond is the host of MeditationPractice.com and can be reached at: will@meditationpractice.com. A longer version of his prayer will be provided upon request.

Laudato Si

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a consumerist lifestyle, above all when few people are capable of maintaining it, can only lead to violence and mutual destruction.

205. Yet all is not lost. Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start, despite their mental and social conditioning. We are able to take an honest look at ourselves, to acknowledge our deep dissatisfaction, and to embark on new paths to authentic freedom....

206. A change in lifestyle could bring healthy pressure to bear on those who wield political, economic, and social power. This is what consumer movements accomplish by boycotting certain products. They prove successful in changing the way businesses operate, forcing them to consider their environmental footprint and their patterns of production. When social pressure affects their earnings, businesses clearly have to find ways to produce differently.... Today, in a word, "the issue of environmental degradation challenges us to examine our lifestyle."

222. Christian spirituality proposes an alternative understanding of the quality of life, and encourages a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle, one capable of deep enjoyment free of the obsession with consumption. We need to take up an ancient lesson, found in different religious traditions and also in the Bible. It is the conviction that "less is more." A constant flood of new consumer goods can baffle the heart and prevent us from cherishing each thing and each moment. To be serenely present to each reality, however small it may be, opens us to much greater horizons of understanding and personal fulfilment. Christian spirituality proposes a growth marked by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little. It is a return to that simplicity which allows us to stop and appreciate the small things, to be grateful for the opportunities which life affords us, to be spiritually detached from what we possess, and not to succumb to sadness for what we lack. This implies avoiding the dynamic of dominion and the mere accumulation of pleasures.

223. Such sobriety, when lived freely and consciously, is liberating. It is not a lesser life or one lived with less intensity. On the contrary, it is a way of living life to the full. In reality, those who enjoy more and live better each moment are those who have given up dipping here and there, always on the look-out for what they do not have. They experience what it means to appreciate each person and each thing, learning familiarity with the simplest things and how to enjoy them. So they are able to shed unsatisfied needs, reducing their obsessiveness and weariness. Even living on little, they can live a lot, above all when they cultivate other pleasures and find satisfaction in fraternal encounters, in service, in developing their gifts, in music and art, in contact with nature, in prayer. Happiness means knowing how to limit some needs which only diminish us, and being open to the many different possibilities which life can offer. Ω

COPELAND SPORTS
MACY'S
VALLEY RIVER INN
STOP WASTEFUL SPENDING POLLUTING
MAYBE CHRISTMAS DOESN'T COME FROM A STORE. MAYBE CHRISTMAS PERHAPS MEANS A LITTLE BIT MORE
STOP BUYING START LIVING

What Can I Do?

Pope Francis

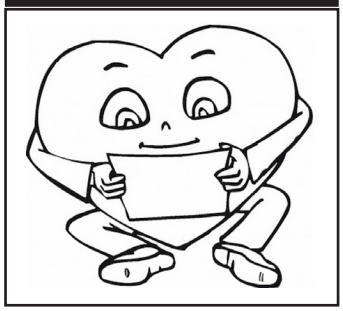
Editor's Note: The following are excerpts from Pope Francis' July 7, 2015 address in Bolivia to The World Meeting of Popular Movments.

Time, my brothers and sisters, seems to be running out; we are not yet tearing one another apart, but we are tearing apart our common home. Today, the scientific community realizes what the poor have long told us: harm, perhaps irreversible harm, is being done to the ecosystem. The earth, entire peoples and individual persons are being brutally punished.... An unfettered pursuit of money rules. The service of the common good is left behind. Once capital becomes an idol and guides people's decisions, once greed for money presides over the entire socioeconomic system, it ruins society, it condemns and enslaves men and women, it destroys human fraternity, it sets people against one another and, as we clearly see, it even puts at risk our common home.

I do not need to go on describing the evil effects of this subtle dictatorship: you are well aware of them. Nor is it enough to point to the structural causes of today's social and environmental crisis. We are suffering from an excess of diagnosis, which at times leads us to multiply words and to revel in pessimism and negativity. Looking at the daily news we think that there is nothing to be done, except to take care of ourselves and the little circle of our family and friends.

What can I do, as collector of paper, old clothes or used metal, a recycler, about all these problems if I barely make enough money to put food on the table? What can I do as a craftsman, a street vendor, a trucker, a downtrodden worker, if I don't even enjoy workers' rights? What can I do, a farmwife, a native woman, a fisher who can hardly fight the domination of the big corporations? What can I do from my little home, my shanty, my hamlet, my settlement, when I daily meet with discrimination and marginalization? What can be done by those students, those young people, those activists, those missionaries who come to my neighborhood with their hearts full of hopes and dreams, but without any real solution for my problems? A lot! They can do a lot. You, the lowly, the exploited, the poor, and underprivileged, can do, and are doing, a lot. I would even say that the future of humanity is in great measure in your own hands, through your ability to organize and carry out creative alternatives, through your daily efforts to ensure the three "L's" (labor, lodging, land) and through your proactive participation in the great processes of change on the national, regional, and global levels. Don't lose heart!...Ω

Letters



Dear Claire and Scott,
Thanks for the June/July issue of *The Catholic Radical* and the opportunity to once again contemplate the challenges of Shelley Douglass' reflection on the "Our Father."

Thanks, too, for "The Pedestrian." I remember reading it decades ago... and wonder if Rod Serling might also have adapted it for a segment of "The Twilight Zone." Back then, I was struck more by the projected power of TV and the acquiescence of the pedestrian than the drone aspect of the police vehicle. Still am.

While TV is not as all-powerful as Ray Bradbury had forecast, I think its distractive role is often significant... perhaps playing an important part in the general public's acquiescence to the war-making, targeted assassination, and torture polices of our government.

Paul and Katja Rehm
Greenville, New York

Dear Scott and Claire,
Thanks so much for the June/July *Catholic Radical*.

I especially appreciated this issue's "Mason Street Musings." Every word spoke to my heart.

Happy summer to you all and condolences for the loss of your uncle Bob. From what Scott wrote, it was clear that those around Bob, his family and friends, (the land, sky, and water, too) nourished and sustained him as much as he nourished and sustained them. Love and joy radiated from the page, embracing everyone. Thanks for sharing his poems. The mischievous humor is irresistible. If only the whole world had known him!

Jeanie Shaterian
Berkeley, California

The Sky is Falling!

Actually it isn't, but a contractor tells us that he is amazed our back porch roof did not collapse last winter. He estimates that it needs to be entirely re-roofed and covered with rubber rather than shingles because the pitch is not steep enough to keep water from getting under the shingles. Our guests sit on that porch all the time, so we really want to repair it as soon as possible. We mentioned this need in our last "Mason Street Musings" and donors helped us raise $1,000, but the contractor says it will cost "thousands." We are going to look for a second opinion, but suspect he is correct. Any extraordinary help, beyond our usual needs, is very much appreciated. Ω

Catholic Worker Calendar

Aug 9 — Nagaski Day Vigil for Nuclear Disarmament: Please join us on the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, Japan, as we join our voices with activists around the world calling for global nuclear disarmament. On the Highland Street side of Worcester's Elm Park, Sunday, from 1-2 P.M.

August 12, September 2 & 16 — Mass or Evening Prayer: Come join us in prayer, song, and Taizé chanting at 7 P.M. 52 Mason Street. Followed by refreshments.

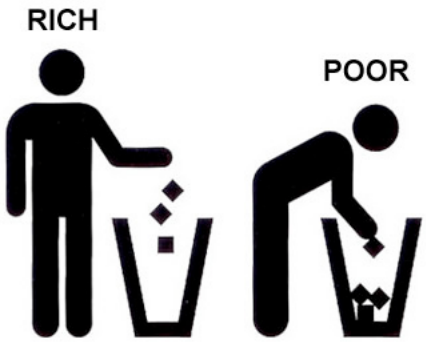
September 14 — Vigil to Remove ROTC: Please join us for our annual vigil calling the College of the Holy Cross to reject military training. Monday, from noon - 1 P.M. on the steps of the Dinand Library.

September 30 — Responding to Global Warming: Come hear Dr. Martha Gach offer practical responses to Global Warming. She is the Conservation Coordinator at Mass Audubon's Broad Meadow Brook Wildlife Sanctuary and professor of biology at Worcester State University, who holds a PhD in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. 7 P.M. 52 Mason Street. Followed by refreshments.

Mason Street Musings

Sitting around our dinner table tonight will be a man from south India, another from Liberia, a woman from Rwanda, a man from rural Arkansas, my wife Claire and I and our son Patrick. Three of us are White with American college degrees and all the privileges that go with them. The others, despite the fact that two of them hold advanced degrees, have faced many obstacles in life — from systemic racism, to a host of problems with the US immigration service, to poverty and instability in their places of birth. Our woman guest was nearly killed several times during the Rwandan genocide. Our guest from Arkansas knows all too well how hurtful the Confederate flag is. Our south Indian guest kept us aware of the unprecedented heat wave this summer which took the lives of 2,230 mostly poor people in India. Our Liberian guest reminds us that his country was created by Americans who hoped to avoid civil war by sending slaves back to Africa.

We sit so near each other, but are still so very far apart. Their struggles are not ours, but have been made more difficult by decisions of our government and even by personal choices we have made. Every time I drive a car, when I could walk, I add carbon to the atmosphere which nudges the temperature higher increasing the chances of drought, heat waves, crop failure, and the political turmoil these catastrophes cause. Decisions by me, my government, American banks, and American corporations have enriched us and impoverished them. And when life becomes so intolerable that they flee, we do not apologize to them, but rather treat them like criminals. Even native born American citizens, who come to Worcester seeking a better life, are turned away from the city shelter. Services are reserved for those who can document at least two year's residence. Others are not much better off



than undocumented immigrants.

And yet Pope Francis, in *Laudatio Si,* says poverty and global warming are not only linked, but must be addressed by governments, businesses, *and* individuals. He says: *"some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So what they all need is an 'ecological conversion,' whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience."*

Pro-lifers need to realize that saving the whale is *integral* to saving the baby. Francis is not lumping the life issues together. He is recognizing the inter-connectedness of the First World's overconsumption and militarism with the suffering of the poor and destruction of the planet. He calls us, by example, to conversion, to a more sustainable and integrated life, ultimately a more wholesome and fulfilling existence. He is not trying to guilt us into sacrifice, but to inspire us to simplify.

Although the costs are higher, we will make an even greater effort than we have in the past to consume locally-grown, organic food, to eschew superfluous uses of our car, to cut our electrical usage, to reduce our waste (especially from plastic), to buy fair-trade and union-made goods, and to boycott companies like Monsanto and ConAgra which cause so much harm to American and Third World agriculture. Your ideas, example, and financial support are boons to us. We do not have all the answers by a long stretch. We need to hear from everyone at our table. Our hopes and dreams need to blend with others rather than exclude them. Thank God for keeping our small ministry going. May this season of harvest be a wonderful one for you all and a better one for those in need!

Scott

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